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Should the Chicago
convention adopt...

[Little Rock]

[1896]

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Should the Chicago convention adopt a gold standard platform or a "straddle"... what course shall the democracy of Arkansas pursue?

[Little Rock, 1896]

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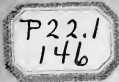
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SHOULD the Chicago Convention adopt a Gold Standard Platform or a "Straddle," or should it nominate a Gold Standard man or a "Straddler" as its candidate for President, what course shall the Democracy of Arkansas pursue?

1896

The 7th of July, 1896, now approaching with the speed of a comet, will be pregnant with the fate, not only of the Democratic party, but, of the nation; not only with the destinies of the children of those who camped with Washington at Valley Forge, but of the toiling millions of all the world for generations now in the womb of the future.

The Democracy of Arkansas stands in the presence of a question the gravity of which dwarfs any other problem that has ever been presented to it or to those who are our comrades in other states, in this great struggle for the emancipation of the world from the grasp of an alien money power. A power that has lain its slimy hands upon our very household gods, and now, with the truculence of unholy and unlawful wealth, threatens to finally fasten upon our limbs and the limbs of our children the chains of a perpetual financial slavery.

Will we do our duty like men endowed with reason and with courage to face the situation as it really is, or will we follow the lights of those who, while agreeing with us in every particular, even to the demand that Arkansas shall send to the Chicago convention an uncompromising silver delegation, seem still to be steeped in a strange torpor? Counsellors who appear unconscious of the far reaching and *permanent* consequences, not only to the old party of the people, but to the American nation, should we surrender or consent, under any circumstances, to the adoption of a platform or the nomination of a candidate at war with its entire history, coupled with a pledge that we will submit to the treason and advise our fellow citizens to do the same.

We know these are many of our comrades in this battle who sympathize in denunciations of "the greatest crime against humanity of modern times," who nevertheless are married to old forms and old habits, and who now, when the necessary and inevitable issue has been sprung, seem "rattled by the stage thunder." In hot haste they have unconsciously echoed the battle cry of our most dangerous enemy, the so-called, but miscalled, gold Democracy, and have promulgated the impossible doctrine that, though the "eastern contingent," with no power to deliver a single electoral vote, under the operation of the two-third rule, (which will be invoked to insure our enslavement,) should dominate our councils, we should surrender our liberties and consign our children to perpetual slavery for the pretended purpose of preserving "harmony" and keeping intact the machinery of a party which every man, at all conversant with the situation, knows would become a byword and an

object of contempt and scorn in the nation and the world. With no class of men would it be more an object of derision than with the plotters whose home is in the caverns of Wall Street. Plotters who would rejoice over such a consummation, as not only insuring the election of a gold Republican administration and the final fastening upon the American people of their English standard, but the destruction of the Democratic party and the scattering of its forces so that, long before any new rallying point of concentration could be gained, it would be forever too late, without bloody revolution, to throw off the yoke of our bondage.

We say these friends unconsciously echo this battle cry for "harmony." It is the last line of defense of the foes in our midst in their attempts to keep us divided in council and thus paralyze our power, in so far as obtaining united and harmonious action on the part of those of us who cling to the traditions of Jefferson and Jackson, is concerned. They shrewdly play upon an honorable impulse on our part toward party fealty in order to betray us, not only to destroy that party, but to surrender our birthright as American citizens.

We have no peculiar interest in this question. As private citizens we desire to see our blood bought liberties transmitted to our children, and what we say is inspired only by a desire to know and impart the truth so that no mistake may be made.

We feel sure that, if those who have made haste to accept a contrary conclusion will judge the considerations here presented, that; if the honest, plain people of Arkansas and other Southern and Western States will consider what is here advanced, there would be no doubt as to the decisive character of their action upon this momentous question.

Who are the loudest, the most persistent in their demands for what they have adopted as a new catch phrase, side by side with "Sound Money," "Fifty Cent Dollar," "Silver Craze," this new coinage of the schemers in Wall street, "Party Harmony?" Read any so called Democratic "Sound Money" paper—read the New York World, the Chicago Chronicle or Times-Herald, the St. Louis Republic, the Memphis Scimitar or the Atlanta Journal—talk with any well known Clevelandite—for an answer. Who are they, and where have they been, and where now in the struggle for emancipation?

In Kentucky for two months a little handful, of not more than five followers of Cleveland, inspired by their desperate leader, whom these "bearers of Greek gifts" in our own midst endorse, have held out against 58 of their fellow Democrats. John G. Carlisle, more than a year ago, declared that, if the National Democracy should declare for unlimited free coinage, he would vote against the ticket.

We call attention to the fact that we have heard no word of censure or criticism for all this, but our "sound money" friends have, in season and out of season, in private converse and through the gold press, rejoiced at the defeat of W. P. Hardin for Governor of Kentucky, and the election of a gold standard Republican in his stead. Has American history ever witnessed a more glaring instance of political duplicity?

In Nebraska, in the month of August, 1894, a State Democratic Convention was called by the regular and only State Committee. It consisted

of 258 delegates. But 24 of these were followers of Mr. Cleveland and his Secretary of Agriculture, the latter of whom was their leader. The list discloses that nearly every one of these 24 were either connected with the great railroad corporations or were appointees of our "Civil Service Reform" Administration, or in some way dependencies upon the same. The convention adopted the famous Nebraska platform in favor of independent and unlimited free coinage. The 24 conspirators remained in the convention and did nothing. The Convention then nominated an entire State ticket with the exception of Governor. The 24 conspirators remained in the convention and voted for every candidate. Nebraska is not a Democratic State. The Populists had nominated for Governor Judge Holcomb, an old Democrat, one of the first citizens of the Commonwealth with a spotless record. By agreement between the two parties—as has been repeatedly done in our history as a party—it was agreed that the convention should simply recommend him to the suffrages of the Democratic voters and us draw the entire Populite strength to our ticket. This was done. Then followed perhaps the most brazen and inexcusable bolt that has ever been executed even by the class of men who pattern by the methods of Tammany and Wall street. Under the pretext that it was unlawful for the convention to omit to nominate a candidate for Governor, they withdrew and set up a convention of their own. One would suppose that, as they made but one complaint, they would be content to nominate a candidate for Governor and go home. It would be hard to conceive how even a follower of Cleveland could contend that the regular organization representing nine-tenths of the voters had abdicated its functions. But, no. They were equal to even that occasion. They proceeded not only to adopt a gold platform, but went through the form of nominating an entire ticket, which carried less than 5,000 votes at the election, while W. J. Bryan, who ran for the United States Senate before the people, carried 82,000 votes. This was not all. The 24 conspirators proceeded to ignore the regular organization and erected a State Central Committee. A year later, in August, 1895, that Committee called a State Convention. That convention adopted a gold platform and put out a ticket, and John G. Carlisle wired a message from Washington congratulating it and recognizing it as the "regular organization!" Read any Democratic gold paper—read the Scimitar, the Republic, Times-Herald, Chronicle, Atlanta Journal, New York World of last August and mark with what tumultuous unanimity all this treason was endorsed. We submit it to any one if he knows of a "workshop of the Golden Calf" which King Cleveland has set up" in our Democratic temple, who has had one word of censure to offer against this high treason. On the other hand, have we not been met with ribald ridicule and bold misrepresentations of facts known by every honest man of all parties in the State of Nebraska to be as we have stated?

In a short time this "rump" of desperate conspirators will call another convention which will elect delegates to the Chicago convention, who will play their part in adopting a gold platform to which we are advised to submit for the sake of what they are pleased to call "harmony."

We will also mention the open threats of treason coming from our sister State of Texas, if the vast majority of the party do not submit to their domineering and impudent demands relative to the calling of their State Convention in such manner as to stifle the voice of the Empire State at Chicago.

What we have called attention to is sufficient to show you the character of these Janus-faced and mendacious conspirators who have originated this hue and cry about "party harmony" at the expense of the very life principle of our organized existence. They have succeeded, temporarily at least, in giving a case of "stage fright" to some of those who as yet have not faced the issue squarely or measured its far reaching consequences. Never since the days when "Hector, son of Priam and Hecuba," beat back from beleaguered Troy the invaders of his country has there been such a dangerous reproduction of that scene in the early dawn of recorded history. It is a "Trojan horse." In its bowels are armed and panoplied enemies. Admit it within our walls, and the flames of the burning citadel of our liberties will reflect upon the horizon of the evening of the Nineteenth century, the fires of that ancient city whose fate should be a warning to us.

This overture, as every man knows, now that "the mask has fallen in the east," comes from those whose pathway, during all these cruel years, has been paved with treachery towards those of us who have trusted them and who have now brought us as a Republic of freemen to the verge of a precipice over which they would plunge us by this final betrayal. Mark what we say. If we yield to their blandishments the final plunge will be taken in 1896. There will be no Democratic party either in name or in substance. Our liberties will be the sacrifice to our own folly. The Rubicon will be crossed, and, upon the ruins of the Republic, will be built what will be, to all intents and purposes, an empire of force in which the multitudes, in whose veins runs the blood of the old continentals, will become the slaves of the money changers and be dragged into the depths of degradation and pauperism.

Will we permit it merely to preserve a shadow when the way is open, not only to preserve intact the old party of the people, but to purge and purify it from contradictions by excluding those who repudiate its spirit, and win now, with the love and confidence of the masses, a decisive triumph, not only for ourselves but for the toiling millions of all the world?

It can not be that the liberties of the American people are to be sacrificed on the altar of our criminal credulity. Would that what we say could penetrate every hamlet from the mountains to the valleys where the cotton grows and be echoed by other and more eloquent tongues to wake from lethargy our fellow citizens, so that they may consider what we have and will presently say upon this subject. The question then as to what we should do would not be in doubt. The danger is not in the question itself, but in the people at large failing to grasp it or to consider the magnitude of results likely to flow from a mistake until they have acted and it is too late.

"But, 'says one,' all that you say relative to the manifest treason of the gold contingent in the Democratic party may be true, but that of itself would not justify us in withdrawing from the Chicago convention if a majority of that convention should declare for gold or straddle either in platform or candidate."

We respectfully present, in answer to this suggestion, facts and considerations which every candid man will be bound to accept as unanswerable. These facts and considerations are now in the atmosphere we breathe. We cannot question their existence. In the onward rush of events, up to now, some may not have considered them. If, after they are presented

and considered, they still advise submission and counsel the advocacy of a gold platform and candidate, if adopted and nominated at Chicago, by an inexorable logic, they must be placed among those who do not favor the restoration of silver to its ancient functions. It is a law as universal as law, that a man must be judged by what will inevitably be the result of his actions. If he is in his senses he cannot plead his want of knowledge that his conduct would not result in disaster. If the common judgment of his fellows is that the disaster was the natural result of causes set in motion by himself, he will be presumed to intend the effect produced by his own actions. One cannot drop a lighted match into a powder magazine and plead that he did not intend an explosion. "A tree must be judged by its fruits."

It has been urged that some of the leaders may resist and this will disrupt the party. The people have taken this question in hand. Whatever they may have been in the past, if they resist, they will no longer be leaders. If they advocate what will be accepted as tantamount not only to the destruction of the party but the loss of our liberties, at the suggestion of counselors who, if any moiety of the reasoning and charges made and sustained in the bimetallic controversy proper are true, are our most dangerous foes, we cannot follow them. The people must scale and capture this last retreat of the enemy, or all the hard fought field will come to naught. If professed friends permit themselves, after full knowledge, to join hands with our enemies upon the battle-ments, however they may regret it, the people will have but one alternative.

In order to fully appreciate just what this promise of surrender in advance comprehends, it will be necessary to analyze the situation as it now appears, not only in Arkansas but among the democracy throughout the entire west and south. It will not be questioned that in this state the bimetallic sentiment, fed as it has been upon the gigantic wrongs of the past twenty years, culminating in the treasons of the present administration, has become so intense among its democratic voters that it is within the bounds of reason, upon a fair test vote, to say that there would not be found more than one democratic voter in ten who does not demand the immediate, unconditional, independent and free coinage of both gold and silver at the ratio of 16 to 1, as the issue, before which all other issues are minimized. In dealing with this question we must take this into account. To ignore it would be to render our conclusions as to results sure to follow the proposed surrender transparently unreliable. No one will question the fact that this sentiment is not only general but that it is radical, and a point of tension has been reached by the people, smarting under a sense of wrong, in which there is a feeling of independence of party ties and an impulse to move in any direction giving reasonable promise of relief. God pity the candidate who enters this canvass with an open and avowed advocacy of Cleveland and his policy as his text. This is the condition here. This is the condition, more or less intensified, in every western and southern state.

Now, suppose we follow the advice of the "harmonizers," and send a silver delegation to Chicago, but also instructed to submit, in the interest of "party harmony," to whatever that convention will do, even though it should adopt a gold platform and nominate a gold standard candidate—even Grover Cleveland. All the world knows that this cannot be done without the viola-

tion of every principle of natural justice and right. Every eastern state north of the Potomac is hopelessly and irretrievably GOLD-REPUBLICAN, and by no possible chance can any one of them deliver a vote in the electoral college for the nominees of the convention. Nevertheless, by design or otherwise, on the part of the plotters in former conventions, when the people were asleep and not on guard against those they look to as friends, when they pretended to declare for bimetalism, it transpires that, on the national committee, North Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Texas, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Nebraska, North Dakota, and even Utah, where the bimetallic sentiment in the party and all parties is about unanimous, are represented by gold standard men, who are in many instances the paid employees of great corporations. Vast wealth and the tremendous power of an administration that has proven itself to be unscrupulous enough for any emergency will be brought to bear; the two-third rule, contesting delegations and every possible device that can be suggested will be exhausted in order to force the body either to a gold standard or a straddle. This will insure, what they contemplate and desire, the destruction of the party which they now hypocritically profess to our halting friends to wish to harmonize and save.

If the advice offered is wise and right it should be followed everywhere. We would have harmony between the leaders willing to submerge principle, but how would it be among the people at home? Imagine the delegation from Arkansas coming home to their constituents, shamed faced and disgraced, and undertaking to advocate before their people, in whose breasts burn the fires of a righteous indignation, to support a ticket and platform which they would abhor with every fibre of their being. Such a ticket and platform would not carry a single congressional district and would be treated with scorn in every precinct by as true Democrats as ever fought in the ranks of the old party. We are not saying what *we* would do. We but predict how the people at large would receive the surrender. This would be true whether they give us a gold platform or a "straddle." Bitter experience has taught us that they result in the same. No man in his heart of heart doubts that this would be the inevitable result in Arkansas, and it would be the same in every southern and western state, while in the east the ticket would be made a mere football of by those mainly instrumental in getting it up as a blind by working upon the quixotic sentiment of some of our brethren. Does anyone question this? We challenge him to name one state which he is willing to declare upon his judgment would be carried by such an abortion.

This would be the first result in so far as the party we wish to preserve is concerned.

We shrink from discussing what would be a second consequence necessarily, and as a corollary, flowing from the same mistake. We say necessarily, because it would follow as effect follows cause. By accepting the advice in good faith, many thousands would leave the ranks and in sufficient numbers to insure the party's utter defeat. But a conscientious following of the advice by leaders, known in the past to be bimetalists, will hold many thousands in line, and thus secure not only the defeat of the ticket, but prevent a concentration of the silver vote of the country and accomplish the real designs of the plotters. Every man that studies the situation will be over-

whelmed with the conviction that what we say is the truth and will follow irresistibly from the situation. The man who *counts* such a result is not a friend of the Democratic party, is not sincerely desirous of seeing the triumph of Jeffersonian bimetalism, however carefully formulated his declarations may be. "A tree must be judged by its fruits."

A third result of this effort to harmonize inharmonious elements, and which is sure to follow, will be this: The reason given for the advice looking to a surrender is that, while we will be defeated as a party, we will hold together the old organization and "fight it out for bimetalism again in 1900." This must be so. These gentlemen claim to be as intensely in earnest on the silver question as we are. Now, if the gold standard men capture the convention, does any one doubt, in the light of recent events, that the entire machinery of the party will be manned by their representatives? With a Republican gold administration at Washington in absolute control of the patronage, the metropolitan press more thoroughly under control of the money power than ever, with colossal fortunes growing more rapidly in their proportions than ever before in the history of the world, how long do our advisers propose to take to again bring forward the party, which they counsel to disgrace and ruin, to win the confidence and love of the common people, rendered each year more helpless by their poverty and despair, with their spirits broken and their children raised, not as we have been, American freemen, but in poverty and want? How long do they propose to take to make the people believe it is in favor of the Old Standard?

This is another result to which we are invited by those who advise a policy of surrender for what they erroneously call "party harmony." It will be but another name for chaos and ruin widespread and universal. From what may follow in the years to come, as American citizens, we turn away in dread.

We question whether there is a man who, deep down in his heart, does not feel and know that we have thrown upon the canvas of the future the shadows of things to come if we accept this policy to which we are invited? It will mean ruin to our party, ruin to ourselves and ruin to the American people and the world, from which there will be no "city of refuge" except by the route of world-wide and bloody revolution in which agonized and struggling humanity will be hopelessly at disadvantage.

God knows we do not wish to challenge any sincere lover of his country, but we must declare right here and now that, in the light of what we have said, there is no escape from it. He who counsels surrender advises the acceptance of the results indicated. The struggle must be made "now or never," now that our limbs are unshackled and our hands unmanacled. We must, though in sorrow, treat those who advocate submission as dangerous, if not to the cause, to the success of that cause though it may be unintentionally so.

* * * * *

"But, 'says one, 'I believe every word you say. I have studied the question in all of its heights and black depths and am filled with dread and dismay. What refuge have we even now? Is it possible that the old party of the people can be held intact and at the same time save our liberties?"

We wish to say to our fellow citizens everywhere, that, if we will be but true to ourselves and use that intelligence which, as freemen, we ought to possess, the victory of modern times is within our grasp, and we will enter the

twentieth century a disenthralled and happy people, blessed and blessing mankind. It is to prevent this that every energy of the "octopus of wealth" is being now put forward, and in no more dangerous form is that energy being made manifest than in this false plea for "party harmony," advanced through the medium of those who are with us in the fight.

Let the southern and western states send delegations to Chicago determined to accept no compromise, and declaring that only those accepting the standards of Jefferson and Jackson have any right in its counsels. If it transpires, for reasons indicated, that the enemies of the party should capture its citadel, either in platform or candidate, either positively or by a "straddle," let them be organized and withdraw, issue an address to the country declaring *themselves to be the National Democratic convention*. The world knows the facts. They have been burned into the brains of the toilers as with fire. Their action will be recognized as just in spite of the vituperation of a purchased metropolitan press. The Arkansas delegation would be hailed with songs of praise by their constituencies and honored as no other delegation in our history, and so of the delegations of every other southern and western state.

Let this convention take a broad and statesmenlike view of the situation and so conduct itself as to win the entire bimetallic vote of the nation. Let it adjourn to meet in St. Louis on July 22, and there, in conjunction with the other great conventions, free from unholy and corrupt eastern allies, construct a Democratic ticket which will unite under the banners of, not a new, but the same old party, purified and rendered acceptable to the hearts and judgment of the people, their fellow patriots of all parties, and which will sweep everything west of the Blue Ridge and south of the Potomac. What they leave in Chicago would be but a shell representing nothing outside of the east where electoral votes are out of the question, a mere tender to the Republican-goldbug locomotive, justly the object of the hatred of all men who really love their country and place its destinies above personal and private gain.

Should we, in spite of the treachery and usurpations of the enemy, control our own, let us put out a ticket above reproach whose record is not recent, but is known of all men and not the subject of "speculation," upon a bimetallic platform and "go to the country." Victory and salvation will then be the portion of ourselves and our children. *There will be no third ticket in the field*. The conventions at St. Louis will but strengthen our hands and augment our forces. They only wait for us to raise the true American standard.

Pursue the policy of surrender and win, not party harmony and strength, but its everlasting overthrow and the loss of our blood bought liberties.

Election the other course and a real triumph, not only for the land we love, but for all mankind, will be prefigured upon the canvas of the future.

Fellow citizens, we are confronted with a crisis such as no other people have been called upon to face in modern times. Will we be true to ourselves?

The times do not call for weakness or sentiment. "Self preservation is the first law of nature." There is too much at stake. This is the only issue and the last opportunity which, as *free men*, we will have. He is blind and willing, apparently, to court destruction who, upon a plea for what he calls

"party harmony," by inevitably producing conditions in which, there will not only not be "party harmony," but in which the party itself will cease to be a factor in our national life, nevertheless counsels surrender.

"A time like this demands
Men whom the lust of office does not kill;
Men whom the spoils of office cannot buy;
Men who possess opinions and a will;
Men who have honor, men who will not lie;
Men who can stand before a demagogue
And damn his treacherous flatteries without winking;
Tall men, sun crowned, who live above the fog,
In public duty and in private thinking."

* * * * *
Your fellow Democrats,

DAVID W. CARROLL, formerly of Jefferson county,
J. D. JAMES, of Benton county,
W. F. HILL, of Pulaski county,
GEORGE W. MURPHY, formerly of Garland county,
JOHN T. KING, of Pulaski county,
CHARLES S. COLLINS, of Pulaski county,
FRANK CARL, formerly of Woodruff county,
JOHN S. BRADDOCK, of Pulaski county.

Little Rock, Ark., March 3, 1896.

PRESS DISPATCH.

JACKSON, MISS., FEBRUARY 20, 1896.—The senate today adopted the following resolution:

WHEREAS, The so-called Whitney boom has created an erroneous impression in some quarters in regard to the financial views of the Democracy of Mississippi; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the people of this state are unalterably favorable to the free and unlimited coinage of both gold and silver at the ratio of 16 to 1, regardless of the action of any other government.

RESOLVED, That it is the sense of the senate of Mississippi, that the states which habitually vote in the electoral colleges against the nominees of the Democratic party should not shape the policies of the party or dictate its nominees.

The house yesterday passed similar resolutions. Adopted in both houses with only *one* dissenting vote.

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